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'CHRISTMAS IN EVERGREEN: BELLS ARE RINGING'

Cast Bios

HOLLY ROBINSON PEETE (Michelle) – Actress, author, talk show host, activist and philanthropist, Holly Robinson Peete has been touched by the entertainment industry almost all her life. Her career as an actress dates back more than three decades and has led her to becoming a voice for her father, her son and her community.

In addition to this year's "Christmas Doctor" for Hallmark Movies & Mysteries and "Christmas in Evergreen: Bells Are Ringing" premiering on Hallmark Channel, Robinson Peete She also stars in the "Morning Show Mysteries" franchise on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries.

Born in Philadelphia and raised in Los Angeles from the age of 10, Robinson Peete had her first experience in front of the camera at the age of four when she appeared on television opposite her father, Matthew Robinson, who served as a producer and portrayed the original beloved character of Gordon on the iconic children's program "Sesame Street." While she knew even at that young age her calling was to be in entertainment, Robinson Peete opted to lead a more typical childhood rather than searching to be the next child star. However, upon finishing her B.A. at Sarah Lawrence College, majoring in French, Robinson Peete's heart led her back to show business. She soon landed the part that made her recognizable to viewers throughout the world on the groundbreaking series "21 Jump Street" opposite Johnny Depp and went on to star in many other successful television series including "Hangin' with Mr. Cooper" and "For Your Love." Additionally, she was seen recurring on hit drama series "Chicago Fire," as well as the comedy series "Mike & Molly." Robinson Peete's successful television career places her as one of only a handful of actresses to star in four shows in syndication. She also successfully launched the show "The Talk" as one of the original co-hosts.

In 1997, Robinson Peete and her husband, former NFL quarterback Rodney Peete, formed the HollyRod Foundation, inspired by her father's courageous battle with Parkinson's disease, with the mission to help improve the quality of life of people with Parkinson's. Then in 2005, inspired by their eldest son's autism diagnosis, HollyRod Foundation's mission expanded to provide support and resources to those affected by autism. Through the HollyRod Foundation and her family's personal experiences, Robinson Peete has become one of the most trusted advocates for consistent and reliable education, outreach and support for both Parkinson's and autism. In August 2020, the HollyRod Foundation teamed up with the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF) for the [Delivering Jobs Campaign](#), which is creating pathways to one million employment and leadership opportunities for people with autism, intellectual and/or developmental differences by 2025. Her autism advocacy also extends to her book co-written with daughter, Ryan Elizabeth Peete, entitled [My Brother Charlie](#) (Scholastic), a bestselling, NAACP Image Award-winning children's book about autism from the sibling's perspective. She co-wrote the follow-up children's

book entitled Same But Different: Teen Life On The Autism Express – which was co-authored by her twins Ryan Elizabeth & RJ.

Her longevity and visibility in the entertainment community has led Robinson Peete to a successful career as a brand ambassador/spokesperson for some of the country's biggest brands. Robinson Peete's consumer and mom-friendly personal brand has partnered with Target, Toys 'R' Us, Colgate, Sketchers, Epipen, Carnation and AARP, among others. In addition to her philanthropic work through the HollyRod Foundation, Robinson Peete has become involved with other organizations as well. She currently serves as a member of the board of her alma mater, Sarah Lawrence College, and the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine's Board of Overseers.

Robinson Peete's philanthropic efforts have earned her numerous awards and honors including: Ford's Freedom Sisters, American Mentor Award, The Southern California Broadcasters' Association Community Service Award, Gerald R. Ford People Helping People Award, The March of Dimes Healthy Babies, Healthy Futures Award, USC Woman of Distinction Award, Anheuser Busch John E. Jacob Community Service Award, The Genii Award, The Girls Inc. Mentor Award, A Place Called Home Humanitarian Award, McDonald's 365 Black Award, Los Angeles Magazine's Most Inspirational Women Award, and many more.

Robinson Peete and husband of 20+ years, Rodney Peete, are the proud parents of four children. They currently reside in Los Angeles.

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UKIYA BERNARD (Hannah) – Rukiya Bernard is a series regular in the TV series "Van Helsing" and has been in "Android Employed" as well as in HGTV's "The Stagers." Recently, Bernard appeared in Hallmark Channel's original movies "One Winter Weekend" and "Christmas in Evergreen: Letters to Santa," and was previously in "Just the Way You Are." Appearing in a wide variety of made-for-television movies, including Hallmark Movies & Mysteries' "Debbie Macomber's Dashing Through the Snow" and "The Gourmet Detective," Bernard can also be seen in Lifetime's "Ungodly Acts" and "Accidental Obsession." Bernard has appeared in episodes of "Supernatural," "Proof," "Intruders," "Witches of East End" and "R.L. Stine's The Haunting Hour," as well as others. Her feature film credits include *Wonder*, *The Cabin in the Woods*, *Tooth Fairy* and *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

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ANTONIO CAYONNE (Elliott) – Antonio is a film, television and theatre actor who originally hails from Toronto, but currently lives in Vancouver. As someone of Trinidadian and Dutch descent, representation has always been at the forefront of his interest in the work he pursues. He comes from a family lineage that is heavily influenced by both the arts and activism.

Antonio's early years were mainly focused on theatre – both as actor and producer – finding his way onto many stages to mount new works with young playwrights. He's had the opportunity to produce pieces of unconventional theatre, and he's been lucky to find a team who draw together art and activism through the company he co-founded, Project: Humanity.

Antonio can be seen on screens around in the world in roles ranging from "The Magicians," "Prison Break" and "Chesapeake Shores" to the the iconic "The X-Files" and cult hits like "iZombie," but the real surprise has been creating a niche for himself amongst Hallmark Channel's romantic comedies as a recognizable face and household name.

In his spare time Antonio co-runs a restaurant group, is active in the community as a voice for anti-oppression work, and is raising his young son in the wild West Coast with his wife.

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BARBARA NIVEN (Carol) – Barbara Niven is an actor, producer and speaker. She's also a fierce advocate for human and animal rights. As a mother and grandmother, she knows there is nothing more important than saving this planet and all the beings that live on it.

During her acting career, she has appeared in more than 100 film and TV roles and 2500 TV and radio commercials. She also served three years on the National Board of Directors for the Screen Actors Guild.

For four seasons, Niven has starred opposite Treat Williams, Diane Ladd and Jesse Metcalfe in the Hallmark Channel prime time series "Chesapeake Shores." She recently starred in the Hallmark & Movies original "USS Christmas," and has the network's popular franchise, "Crossword Mysteries: A Puzzle to Die For," "Crossword Mysteries: Proposing Murder" and "Crossword Mysteries: Abracadaver." Niven starred with Alison Sweeney in the popular Hallmark Movies & Mysteries original movie franchise "Murder She Baked" and in the Hallmark Channel Original Series "Debbie Macomber's Cedar Cove." Her performance as Marilyn Monroe in HBO's "The Rat Pack" continues to garner praise as "one of the Top 3 portrayals of the blonde icon on Film & TV."

Niven has also gained international acclaim as Hollywood's Top Media Trainer and Video Marketing Coach. She created her Unleash Your Star Power!™ system so she could teach people how to hone their message, overcome fear and, use video and public speaking to dominate their niche.

Niven is also a celebrity speaker and best-selling author. Business and motivational topics include *Unleash Your Star Power!*, *Be a Video Marketing Superstar*, *ACT As If*, *Live Your Dreams!* And *Eating Disorders and Pressures to be Perfect*.

Barbara Niven is a huge animal welfare advocate and is a National Ambassador for American Humane. She presents for Hallmark Channel's televised "American Hero Dog Awards" each year. She currently has three rescued dogs named Norma Jeane, Brando and Meggy, and two rescued feral cats named George and Henry (named after her father, George Henry).

Her motto? "Live your passion, connect to your purpose, make a difference. And don't give up five minutes before the miracle."

For more information visit www.BarbaraNiven.com.

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COLIN LAWRENCE (Thomas) – Colin is currently a series regular on the hit Netflix series, “Virgin River” and can also be seen in heavily recurring roles on ABC’s “Somewhere Between,” The CW’s “Riverdale,” E!’s “The Arrangement,” and DirecTV’s “Rogue.” Previous to that, he was seen recurring on “Impastor,” “iZombie,” “Minority Report,” “The Killing,” “Continuum,” and J.J. Abrams’ “Alcatraz.”

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ASHLEY WILLIAMS (Allie) – Ashley Williams is one of Hollywood’s most versatile actresses and continues to bring her talents to comedies and dramas in film, television and theatre. She most recently starred in the Hallmark Channel original movie “Holiday Hearts,” and in the TV Land series “The Jim Gaffigan Show,” in which she played Jeannie Gaffigan, Jim’s TV wife, who was the grounding, yet zany, wind beneath his wings.

Williams also appeared alongside Jessica Chastain and Oscar Issac in the critically acclaimed film *A Most Violent Year*. In past years she starred in the Warner Bros. film *Something Borrowed*, alongside Kate Hudson and Ginnifer Goodwin. Her other film credits include the Oscar®-nominated indie *Margin Call*, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival and starred Kevin Spacey, Jeremy Irons and Zachary Quinto.

Williams first won over audiences as a teenager when she played Meg Ryan’s daughter, Danielle Andropoulos, on “As the World Turns.” Later, she starred alongside Mark Feuerstein in the NBC series “Good Morning Miami” and in the Lifetime telefilm “Montana Sky.” Williams also had a memorable recurring role on the comedy “How I Met Your Mother” as Victoria, “the one that got away” from Ted, played by Josh Radnor. She was so popular on the show that she won an online poll conducted by the production staff as to the character fans would most like to see the as “The Mother.” Her other television credits include recurring roles on the Holly Hunter series “Saving Grace,” “Warehouse 13” and “Huff,” as well as guest-starring roles on “FBI,” “Instinct,” “The New Adventures of Old Christine,” “Monk,” “The Mentalist,” “The Good Wife,” “Psych,” “Girls” and “Law & Order: SVU,” to name just a few.

In recent years, Williams began producing movies for Hallmark Channel, debuting with “Love on a Limb,” which aired as part of the network’s “Fall Harvest” Programming Event in 2016 to record breaking ratings and stunning reviews. She now has more films in development with Hallmark and is looking forward to shooting her next producing foray, “Christmas at the Madison,” with her older sister Kimberly Williams-Paisley. She loves working with the executives at Hallmark who have empowered her creatively in ways she never could have imagined as an actress. In addition to her ongoing behind-the-camera work for Hallmark Channel, Williams has starred in the Hallmark Channel Original Movies “Northern Lights of Christmas,” “Christmas in the City,” “October Kiss,” “Love on a Limb,” “Christmas in Evergreen: Letters to Santa” and “Holiday Hearts.”

This past year Williams made her directorial debut with *MEATS*, a short film she wrote, produced and starred in and which is currently being submitted to festivals.

Born in Westchester, New York, Williams studied at Boston University’s renowned School of Theatre Arts and spent a year abroad at LAMDA and RADA in London. She was a member of the acting company at the prestigious Williamstown Theatre Festival at Williams College. Her first

job out of college was understudying both Rachel Weisz and Gretchen Mol in the Off-Broadway play *The Shape of Things*, written and directed by Neil LaBute. At various times during the run of the play, Williams performed both roles. She also starred alongside Wendie Malick in the Off-Broadway production of *Burleigh Grimes* and opposite Tom Skerritt and Sebastian Arcelus in the Broadway production of *A Time to Kill*, based on the best-selling John Grisham novel.

With a natural skill for writing, Williams has penned several moving and personal pieces about her miscarriage and her mother's longtime battle with Alzheimer's disease for [People.com](https://www.people.com) and [Medium.com](https://www.medium.com). In addition to these other passions, Williams is a birth doula, offering emotional, physical and informational support to mothers and their partners leading up to labor, through childbirth, and throughout postpartum. She currently splits her time between Los Angeles and New York with her husband and two young sons.

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